



**Testimony of Sean Bradbury**  
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To the Veterans' Affairs Committee  
March 3, 2016

Senator Flexer, Representative Hennessy, Senator Martin, Representative Yaccarino, and member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to you on three bills of interest to the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System.

Regarding **SB 261 AN ACT CONCERNING VETERANS SERVICES AT STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) System proudly serves over 2,600 self-identified veterans. Based on data collected last year, the twelve community colleges enroll nearly 1,500 veterans, the four Universities enroll over 1,000 veteran students, and our online college enrolls over 100. Every institution in the system provides an Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service Members (OASIS) center. Throughout the system there is a concerted effort to provide opportunities for student engagement, academic support, recognition activities, as well as structured events highlighting the importance of the student veterans' service and contribution that they bring to the diversity of our institutions.

We are proud of the work that our OASIS centers do to help our veterans. Our community colleges currently do not have full-time staff dedicated to them, but SB 261 would require our system to hire at least 12 new full-time employees to staff these centers.

Similarly, both **SB 287 AN ACT CONCERNING TUITION AND FEE WAIVERS FOR VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**, and **HB 5471 AN ACT CONCERNING UNUSED TUITION AND FEE WAIVERS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND FAMILY OF VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD** have the laudable goals of giving back to our veterans and their families for all they have sacrificed for us. However, both of these bills will add new costs to our system to support these fee and tuition waivers. These new costs will come at a time when our system is facing significant budget cuts, and will have the unforeseen side effect of adding to the potential layoffs and service reductions across our system. As a result, we will have even fewer resources available to help our veterans and other students achieve success.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today.